

## SAWMILLS

Sawmills, like topsy, grew quickly in the early days of Midway. The need for lumber was urgent and the settlers were grateful for any amount that could be produced.

Because of the urgency for lumber, and the rapidity with which mills were built, it is difficult to know which was the "first" sawmill in Midway. For this reason, this account lists no one owner as "first."

An early operator was Father Mills of Provo. Sidney Epperson wrote in his journal about Father Mills as follows: "Mr. Huber states that Father Mills wheeled tools in a wheel barrow from Provo and located a sawmill here in the upper settlement on Snake Creek. At night he locked himself in a box as protection from bears and snakes."

Peter Shirts (Shurtz) had a mill on Snake Creek which contained an old style "up and down saw." He operated the mill only a few years and then sold it in 1864 to Henry Coleman Sr., who ran the mill for some time. Mr. Coleman employed John H. Van Wagoner as an assistant.

John Watkins also operated a sawmill, but located it on Deer Creek. Most of these mills were water-powered, though some utilized steam power in later years.

Most of the logs for the sawmills were hauled by horses or ox teams. Most loggers preferred oxen since they were slow, steady and not easily excited.

Moroni Blood was another sawmill operator. He was able to produce smooth lumber with a planer that he made himself. Other owners and operators included Ephraim Hanks, David Van Wagoner, William Howard, Henry Alexander, John Huber and Jacob Buehler.

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List of: SAWMILLS & OWNERS IN MIDWAY

OWNER	TYPE OF MILL	LOCATION
" Father Mills of Provo	Water power	Upper Settlement on Snake Creek
Peter Shirts	Old style up & down saw	on Snake Creek
Henry Coleman	Purchased Peter Shirts Mill	on Snake Creek
John Van Wagoner worked for Coleman		
John Watkins	Water powered	Deer Creek
Moroni Blood		
Ephriam Hanks		
David Van Wagoner		
William Howard		
Henry Alexander		
John Huber		
Jacob Buehler		
Kurt Rothe		
REFERENCES: 1. HBUM p 576 2. HBUM p 769		

William Henry Oaks - Sawyer,  
Farmer, Bear Hunter

WILLIAM HENRY AND MARY  
SESSIONS OAKS 769

William Henry Oaks was born at Council Bluffs, Iowa, July 17, 1849, a son of Hiram and Sarah Oaks. He married Mary Sessions in the Salt Lake Endowment House in the fall of 1871. She died in 1880. William died March 28, 1923.

William came with his parents to Utah in 1852 and spent his early years in American Fork and Provo. About 1859 the family moved into the Midway area and located about three miles west of the present site of Heber.

As a young man William took an active part in the Black Hawk Indian War. After his marriage his wife bore three children, two boys and a girl, and then died early in life in the year 1880.

William was a man of pioneering disposition, and spent most of his life in the mountains. He was especially known as a great bear hunter.

During the summer of 1890 his father and two brothers, Martin and John, bought a sawmill and moved to Ashley in Uintah County. William joined them and spent the rest of his life in Eastern Utah. He was also active in farming in the Ashley area.

